

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSLO 04870 271458Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4870

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, NATO, NPG, NO
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE ERW

1. DURING AN OCTOBER 26 BREAKFAST HOSTED BY THE AMBASSADOR FOR SECRETARY OF LABOR MARSHALL, FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND MADE A NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ERW TO THE DCM.

2. FRYDENLUND SAID THAT HE HAD INITIALLY PROPOSED TO THE NORWEGIAN CABINET THAT THE NORWEGIAN POSITION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB SHOULD BE THAT SINCE THE NEUTRON BOMB DID NOT EFFECT NORWAY GIVEN NORWAY'S NUCLEAR BASING POLICY, THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE NO PUBLIC POSITION ON IT. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT ABLE TO PERSUADE THE CABINET THAT THIS IS THE POSITION NORWAY SHOULD TAKE AND, THEREFORE, HAD MADE HIS STATEMENT ON THE ERW. (OSLO 4657). HIS OBJECTIVE IN THE STATEMENT WAS TO TRY TO KEEP THE GON'S PUBLIC POSITION ON THE WEAPON OPEN.

3. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT TIME WAS NOW BEGINNING TO OPERATE AGAINST THIS STRATEGY. HE FELT THAT SOONER OR LATER A POLITICIAN HERE WOULD COME OUT PUBLICLY AGAINST THE BOMB. THIS WOULD IN TURN FORCE OTHER PUBLIC FIGURES TO OPPOSE IT.
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EVENTUALLY, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ISOLATED ALONE AS THE ONLY GROUP WHICH HAD NOT PUBLICLY OPPOSED IT. FRYDENLUND NOTED THAT LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN STEEN HAD ALREADY MADE A STATEMENT SLIGHTLY LESS FAVORABLE TO THE BOMB THEN THE GOVERNMENT'S (STEEN SAID IN A SPEECH OCT 12 THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB "...DEMONSTRATED HOW THE WORLD'S SCIENTIFIC CAPACITY IS IN THE SERVICE OF DESTRUCTION RATHER THAN IN PRO-

VIDING PEOPLE WITH FOOD, CLOTHING AND HOUSING. INTRODUCTION OF THE BOMB COULD DISTURB THE NEGOTIATIONS IN PROGRESS FOR DISARMAMENT. ABOVE ALL, THE NEUTRON BOMB ILLUSTRATES THE NECESSITY OF REACHING CONCRETE RESULTS IN THE WORK FOR GENERAL AND RECIPROCAL ARMS REDUCTIONS.") FRYDENLUND THOUGHT THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLES' PARTY WOULD PROBABLY MAKE A STATEMENT AGAINST IT AND ALSO THE CENTER PARTY. ALREADY, FRYDENLUND NOTED, HE WAS BEING PORTRAYED IN SOME PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES AS "A FRIEND OF THE NEUTRON BOMB." HIS POSITION WOULD THUS BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT OVER TIME.

4. AN ADDED ELEMENT WHICH FRYDENLUND FEELS HE MUST CONSIDER, IS THE POSITION OF THE NETHERLAND'S GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS RECENTLY MADE PUBLIC BY THE DUTCH MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE. THE HAGUE'S RATHER NEGATIVE VIEW OF ERW COUPLED WITH THEIR FEELING THAT NO IMMEDIATE DECISION IS NECESSARY, WILL, THE FOREIGN MINISTER THINKS, INCREASE THE PRESSURES ON THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A LESS HELPFUL PUBLIC POSITION ON THE ERW.

5. FRYDENLUND SAID HE EXPECTED THAT THE US WOULD NOT REACH A DECISION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR AND THAT THE ISSUE WOULD THEREFORE STILL BE OPEN AT THE DECEMBER MINISTERIAL MEETING. MEANWHILE HE WOULD TRY TO KEEP THE GON'S PUBLIC POLICY AS WAS. HE WOULD ALSO, HE SAID, CONTACT WITH HIS DANISH COUNTERPART, K.B. ANDERSEN, WITH WHOM HE CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD AGREED TO CONSULT AND WHO WANTED TO KEEP THE DANISH GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC POSITION OPEN, TOO.

6. COMMENT: NORWEGIAN POPULAR SENTIMENT HAS HISTORICALLY OPPOSED NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT, DEPLORED THEIR EFFECTS, SUPPORTED ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT BUT RECOGNIZED THE COUNTRY'S AND THE ALLIANCE'S, SECURITY RESTED ON THEIR INEVITABLE POSSESSION -- FIRST AND FOREMOST -- BY THE US. EMBASSY IS INCLINED TO SHARE FRYDENLUND'S APPARENT PERCEPTION THAT THE DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION ARE SUCH THAT THE LONGER THE US WAITS TO DECIDE ON THE ERW THE HARDER IT WILL BE FOR THE GON TO REMAIN SILENT ON THE ISSUE. THE SITUATION COULD BE PROBABLY COUNTERBALANCED BY A CLEAR PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE ERW'S MILITARY UTILITY. LERNER

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